

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 KABUL 04282 100449Z

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8676

S E C R E T KABUL 4282

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AF, US

SUBJECT: VISIT TO AFGHANISTAN BY THE SECRETARY

SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE RECOMMENDS THAT IF THE SECRETARY VISITS SOUTH ASIA, HE SHOULD INCLUDE A BRIEF LUNCHEON STOP IN KABUL.

1. WITH INDO-PAK AND BANGLADESH-PAK TENSIONS MORE OR LESS DEFUSED FOR THE TIME BEING. AFGHANISTAN'S DISPUTE WITH PAKISTAN MAY BE THE MOST POTENTIALLY INFLAMMABLE DISPUTE IN SOUTH ASIA. AN ERUPTION OF THAT BILATERAL DISPUTE INTO VIOLENCE WOULD BRING INTO PLAY CONFLICTING SOVIET, CHINESE, IRANIAN AND INDIAN INTERESTS AND WOULD BECOME A SERIOUS INTERNATIONAL CRISIS IN WHOSE RESOLUTION THE U.S., IN ITS OWN INTERESTS, WOULD BECOME INVOLVED.
2. IF WE ARE TO MINIMIZE THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH A CRISIS ERUPTING, WE WILL NEED FRANK, CONFIDENT CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE DAOUD REGIME. THIS IS NOT AS EASY AS IT SOUNDS, BECAUSE DAOUD AND SOME OF HIS COHORTS CONTINUE TO HARBOR SUSPICIONS AND GRUDGES ABOUT THE US, BASED ON OUR LINKS TO PAKISTAN AND THE STILL-REMEMBERED US REFUSAL TO SUPPLY MILITARY ASSISTANCE IN THE 1950'S.
3. A VISIT BY THE SECRETARY WOULD HELP ESTABLISH THAT KIND OF UNIGUE PERSONAL COMMUNICATION AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS WITH DAOUD WHICH SOMEDAY MIGHT BECOME CRITICAL FOR US. CONVERSELY, WERE THE SECRETARY TO VISIT THIS REGION AND ESPECIALLY PAKISTAN

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WITHOUT VISITING AFGHANISTAN, DAOUD'S SUSPICIONS ABOUT OUR

ATTITUDES TOWARD HIM (DAOUD IS AFGHANISTAN FOR THE PRESENT) WOULD BE INCREASED, HIS ALREADY RATHER LIMITED RECEPTIVITY TO SUGGESTIONS FROM US WOULD BE GREATLY DECREASED, AND THE INFLUENCE WITH HIM OF THE SOVIETS, WHO ARE LESS INTERESTED THAT WE ARE IN RESTRAINING AFGHAN IRREDENTISM, WOULD RISE. IN FACT, DAOUD MIGHT CONCLUDE WE HAD WRITTEN AFGHANISTAN OFF.

4. IN A MEETING WITH DAOUD, THE SECRETARY COULD PUT SOME MORE REALISM INTO DAOUD'S THINKING ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, IMPART TO HIM OUR CONFIDENCE IN HIS ABILITY TO LEAD AFGHANISTAN ON THE ROAD TO PEACEFUL PROGRESS AND MAKE HIM FEEL THAT BECAUSE WE TREAT HIM AS A RESPONSIBLE STATESMAN, HE SHOULD BEHAVE LIKE ONE. THE SECHOARY'S VISIT TO AFGHANISTAN WOULD ALSO UNDERLINE TO THE SOVIETS, THE INDIANS AND IRANIANS OUR INTEREST IN STABILITY IN THIS AREA.

6. THE SECRETARY'S VISIT COULD BE A LUNCHTIME STOP, INVOLVING A MEETING WITH ALOUD AND A LUNCH, UNDOUBTEDLY WITH DAOUD THE HOST. TOTAL TIME ON THE GROUND IN KABUL COULD BE LIMITED TO FOUR HOURS.
ELIOT

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